

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL ACCREDITATION Dept.



الإمارات العربية المتحدة
وزارة التربية والتعليم
إدارة الاعتماد المدرسي

Sharjah English School

Al Sharjah Education Zone

Explanation of the judgements used in the report

Highly effective: Good outcomes or good professional practice.

Effective: Acceptable outcomes or competent professional practice.

Not yet effective: Outcomes or quality not yet at the effective level. Schools will be expected to act to improve the quality of any aspect of their performance or practice that is judged at this level.

Information about the school

Sharjah English School is a private school, situated in Sharjah, providing education for male and female students in Foundation 1 to Year 13, aged 3 years to 18 years. At the time of the evaluation, there were 674 students on roll. Of these only 1% was Emirati.

Sharjah English Private School was evaluated in February 2014 as part of the Ministry of Education School Evaluation Programme. Evaluators considered six key focus areas – the leadership of the school, the school as a community, the school's approach to student learning, the classroom climate, students' personal development, and students' attainment and progress.

Recommendation for Accreditation

Sharjah English Private School has achieved the standards required and is recommended to the Ministry of Education for accreditation. All six focus areas were evaluated as highly effective.

Focus Area 1: The leadership of the school

Aspects of the school's leadership which were positive

❖ **The quality and impact of leadership vision and practice**

A distinctive style of leadership had exerted a powerful influence on school improvement in a short time. The Principal had developed a positive ethos where all staff were respected and empowered, resulting in high motivation and morale which inspired staff to exceed expectations. His leadership conveyed a sense that only the best quality of education would be accepted, and his approach was creative and forward looking. He and his team combined strategic thinking with exceptional organisational skills. The impact on school culture, quality of teaching and learning and attainment was significant. There was a balance of nurture and challenge that promoted self-esteem and independence. Teachers constantly sought to develop and refine their teaching, always taking account of students' individual needs in terms of curriculum and teaching approaches. They worked collaboratively which helped to accelerate good practice. Shared leadership was well established. Against international standards, attainment was excellent. Students were confident learners with high aspirations for their futures. The Governing Body supported the school well and had recently introduced performance management arrangements for the Principal.

❖ **Planning for improvement**

The Principal had established a planning process to inform school improvement. School self-evaluation (SSE) was thorough, drawing on an extensive range of evidence collected in consultation with staff. The leadership team (SMT) considered both strengths and areas for development and had a clear set of priorities focused on excellence in teaching and the quality of students' learning and social experience. The School Development Plan (SDP) included key objectives, timescales and success criteria against which to measure progress. Monitoring and evaluation included observation of lessons, analysis of data and identification of patterns and trends. Analysis by gender and more precise target setting was currently under consideration. The leadership team and middle leaders guided the implementation of plans at every stage and were flexible in making necessary changes. The impact of the process showed in the pace and quality of school improvement.

❖ **Continuing professional development**

There was a vibrant programme of professional development (CPD) which was responsive to teachers' and school needs. The Principal had a clear understanding of teachers' potential. The CPD co-ordinator promoted leadership skills and had successfully encouraged a number of teachers to develop as leading practitioners. He also introduced weekly sessions for staff to share exceptional practice. The impact had contributed significantly to the current quality of students' educational experience.

❖ **The learning environment**

The school campus, with five modern buildings set in extensive gardens, was of a unique quality. Provision for performing arts with an auditorium and specialist rooms, and sport with extensive playing fields and swimming pool was exceptional. There was a spacious well equipped library, three information technology (IT) suites and an open plan Foundation Stage building with stimulating resources, all contributing to an outstanding learning environment. All buildings and resources were used to promote the best possible learning experience and to benefit the whole school community.

Aspects of the school's leadership that should be improved

❖ **None of significance**

Overall judgement of Focus Area 1: **The leadership of the school was highly effective**

Recommendations for improvement

❖ **None of significance**

Focus Area 2: The school as a community

Aspects of the school as a community which were positive

❖ **A supportive and caring learning environment**

The school had fostered good relationships between students who represented fifty different nationalities. Students communicated in an open and friendly way and discussed their work on the way to and from classes. Relationships between students and teachers were also good. Students felt respected and valued. They said they readily took any concerns or problems to their teachers. Parents confirmed that their children enjoyed going to school and

liked their teachers. Teachers spoke about students in a positive way and acted as role models. Staff morale was very high.

❖ **Pastoral care**

The pastoral team worked together successfully to plan and support student guidance issues. The school doctor and nurses provided a high level of care, for example, with diabetes medication. Students' awareness of their own health and wellbeing had been raised although impact was not documented. The personal, social and health education programme supported the high quality welfare and guidance with, for example, sessions on relationships and personal issues.

❖ **An open-door policy for parents**

Parents reported that the school was always welcoming and school kept them informed through regular meetings and excellent home-school communications including electronic media. In the Foundation Stage, students' records of achievement were on the website for parents to access and a home-school diary kept the parents well informed of daily happenings and progress. Parents were encouraged to support in the classroom. For example, a parent helped with the teaching of Arabic in the primary school and parents helped in Foundation and Key Stage 1 (KS1) classrooms.

Aspects of the school as a community that should be improved

❖ **None of significance**

Overall judgement of Focus Area 2: **The school as a community was highly effective**

Recommendations for improvement

❖ **None of significance**

Focus Area 3: The school's approach to student learning

Aspects of the school's approach to student learning which were positive

❖ **Addressing the needs of all students**

Teachers planned the curriculum for each subject to ensure appropriate access and extension opportunities for individual students. Teachers designed detailed plans to address the full range of students' needs, with a positive impact on students' understanding of subject content. They provided helpful additional materials in recognition of students' interests and abilities, such as supplementary texts and individual writing frames. A learning support co-ordinator worked with a team of assistants to oversee the quality of special support. She compiled a detailed register of students with specific needs, including dyslexia and autism, using educational psychologist evaluations when required. Another teacher co-ordinated information about students who were gifted in particular areas, ensuring that they could fully develop their talents.

❖ **Extracurricular activities**

The school organised a rich variety of extracurricular opportunities at break times and after school. These ranged across the performing arts with choirs, rock bands, drama clubs, and dance; sport with rugby, football, netball, swimming and gymnastics; subject enhancement activities with science, philosophy and debating clubs. Uptake was high and students used their participation to achieve significant success in sporting and national debating competitions. They presented musical and drama productions each term and developed a Model United Nations forum and literacy magazine. A co-ordinator oversaw and facilitated the activities programme and monitored participation and impact.

❖ **Transition management**

There was a strong pastoral team who ensured that students at each transition phase were informed and supported without interruption to the flow of learning. They organised visits and introduced students to learning expectations, facilities and teachers. The sixth form team provided excellent information and guidance to facilitate university entrance nationally and internationally.

Aspects of the school's approach to student learning that should be improved

❖ **None of significance.**

Overall judgement of Focus Area 3: The school's approach to student learning was highly effective

Recommendations for improvement

❖ **None of significance**

Focus Area 4: The classroom climate

Aspects of the classroom climate which were positive

❖ **Good student participation in lessons**

Students participated well in lessons and made good progress. In almost all lessons seen, students were fully engaged, attentive and knew what was expected of them. Students in both the primary and the secondary schools were confident to ask the teachers questions if they were unsure of anything. There was a general culture of mutual support. Students enjoyed working on tasks together and were conscientious in marking one another's work. They were careful with school resources and accessed and tidied away equipment and resources in a helpful and efficient manner.

❖ **Good learning strategies**

Students in all Key Stages showed they were keen learners and that they had developed a range of personal skills to support and enhance the learning process. In both the primary and secondary schools, students were confident when working or researching independently. They also had note-taking skills and confidently presented their work and research to their peers.

❖ **Good teaching skills and approaches**

Teachers had good subject knowledge and were able to use a wide range of teaching approaches to keep lessons lively and fresh. For example, a Year 6 maths lesson on plotting graphs was inventively delivered as a murder mystery. Students gained the important skills of converting written information into data for plotting on a graph and for checking the outcomes with study partners, all within a highly enjoyable activity. Teachers helped students develop skills for independent work and research by setting plenty of opportunities for these in lessons.

❖ **Teachers knew their students well**

In general teachers displayed a good knowledge of the individual students in their classes. Because they knew where students were strong and where they needed support, teachers were able to place students into ability groups in the classrooms and provide tasks and challenges that were appropriate to individual needs.

❖ **Higher order skills**

Throughout the school, across all key stages and in most lessons, teachers strove to develop students with enquiring minds who were confident in articulating their thoughts and putting forward their ideas. Teachers demonstrated good facilitation skills, respect for students' contributions, patience and encouragement. Teachers' checked students work with attention to detail and gave helpful feedback.

❖ **Rich learning environments**

Classrooms and other teaching spaces were generally well presented, with good quality displays to stimulate learning or to celebrate the achievement of the students. Classrooms were clean, bright, attractive places, conducive to learning.

Aspects of the classroom climate that should be improved

❖ **Lesson objectives**

Although nearly all lessons showed clear objectives that teachers shared with the students, students could not always use these to check their own progress. In a number of lessons teachers did not refer back to the objectives after the first introduction, so they played no part in the plenary session, nor were they referred to as the lesson progressed.

Overall judgement of Focus Area 4: The classroom climate was highly effective. Recommendations for improvement

❖ **Improve the teachers' use of lesson objectives by:**

- Ensuring that lesson objectives are expressed clearly and made use of in the lesson
- Encouraging students to review the learning objectives of lessons in checking their own work
- Providing teachers with professional development on the development and use of learning objectives

Focus Area 5: Students' personal development

Aspects of students' personal development which were positive

❖ Students' exemplary behaviour

There was a constructive culture of excellent behaviour across the school which was actively fostered by staff and students themselves. Students were relaxed and friendly without losing their sense of educational purpose. They were confident, self-disciplined and mature in their attitudes to other students and staff, showing composure in all situations. They shared a sense of fun and challenge with teachers and each other while always observing a clear sense of respect. Overall attendance was average at 94%, although some class groups had high attendance at 96%. Students were invariably punctual to lessons.

❖ Contribution to the life of the school and community

Students were willing to take responsibility and make independent decisions. Older students were positive role models and supported younger ones to develop their social and communication skills. They encouraged them to take part in activities and helped to build their confidence, for example in the performing arts and sport. There was a flourishing student council whose members liaised with the Principal to discuss suggestions from class groups. Students supported regional and international charities, for example collecting money for local workers and for various world disaster appeals. They contributed significantly to environmental programmes.

Aspects of students' personal development that should be improved

❖ Promoting UAE culture

Students showed respect for UAE culture, celebrated National Day and sang the national anthem in Arabic. However, there was no consistently strong emphasis on this aspect of school life. While there were curriculum modules about UAE history, geography and economic development, coverage was limited and inconsistent.

Overall judgement of Focus Area 5: Students' personal development was highly effective

Recommendations for improvement

❖ Encourage and sustain a richer awareness of UAE culture and traditions by:

- Appointing a co-ordinator to research and create a programme of activities to reflect the richness of UAE culture and tradition
- Ensuring that the programme is regularly monitored and developed
- Seeking ideas and involvement from parents and community
- Organising training for teachers to raise awareness across the whole school

Focus Area 6: Students' attainment and progress

Aspects of students' attainment and progress which were positive

❖ Students' exceptional progress in English

Students entered the school with a wide range of ability in English but made exceptional progress. In the Foundation Stage students were immersed in a language-rich environment and could speak confidently by Foundation 2. By Key Stage 2, most students could write original paragraphs accurately. By the beginning of Key Stage 3 they showed very good comprehension skills and contributed confidently to a discussion about Shakespearean theatre. By Key Stage 4 almost all students were fluent speakers with an extensive vocabulary. Year 11 students' performance in English examinations was much higher than international standards. Year 12 and 13 students could make a sophisticated critical analysis of language, character and context and their writing was original and creative.

❖ Students' high level of success in mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology examinations

Students performed exceptionally well by international standards,. The majority of boys and girls studied triple sciences. All had achieved A*-C grades at GCSE and had done so for the past three years. In addition, around two thirds of these students obtained an A* or A grade. In mathematics results were similar, with almost all students attaining an A*-C grade and around two-thirds attaining an A* or A.

❖ Students' very good progress in almost all subjects

In the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, students progressed well. Foundation Stage children understood number combinations to five and ten. Key Stage 2 students knew about the gases composing the earth's atmosphere in science; could use spreadsheets in ICT and plot graphs and handle data in maths. Key Stage 3 students confidently used decimals and positive and negative roots. Across nearly all the twenty subjects at GCSE and at A Level, students made good progress. Year 12 students confidently used trigonometry, coordinate geometry and understood exponential functions in maths.

❖ Very high attainment in the primary school

In the three core subjects, English, mathematics and science, measured by KS2 SATs at age 11, students attained very highly and exceeded international standards.

❖ Preparation for the future

Students were well prepared for the next stage of their education or for direct entry into careers. Students in the upper secondary school had good language, communication and presentation skills. They had a very strong academic profile and a repertoire of skills in independent research, team working, time management and IT. A large percentage of students went on to university. Parents reported that the school provided students with good quality guidance for university entry.

Aspects of students' attainment and progress that should be improved

❖ Slow progress in Arabic and Islamic studies in the secondary school

Progress in Arabic and Islamic Studies was slow in the secondary school. For example in Year 9, only a few students could read some verses of a Surah from the Holy Qur'an. In the primary school however, most Year 1 students studying Arabic could read letters of the

alphabet. By Year 4 most students had developed an extended vocabulary and could construct words correctly. This good progress was not maintained at secondary level.

Overall judgement of Focus Area 6: Students' attainment and progress was highly effective

Recommendations for improvement

❖ **Improve the quality of provision for Arabic and Islamic Studies in the secondary school by:**

- Building upon the progress students make in Arabic in the Primary school.
- Monitoring year-on-year progress in these subjects
- Providing staff professional development on teaching to diverse ability levels within the same class

Summary of judgements

In their evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the school, the evaluation team made judgements about the following aspects of the school's performance.

The leadership of the school	Highly Effective
The school as a community	Highly Effective
The school's approach to student learning	Highly Effective
The classroom climate	Highly Effective
Students' personal development	Highly Effective
Students' attainment and progress	Highly Effective

The capacity of the school to improve

The evaluation team has considered the capacity of the school leadership to act on the recommendations in the report and to improve over the next 12 month period. The team's confidence in the capacity of the leadership of the school to act on the recommendations in the report and to improve school performance in the relevant areas within the next 12 months is: **HIGH**

HIGH confidence means that the evaluation team believes that the current school leadership will take a positive attitude towards the findings of the report and will quickly act on the recommendations. The team would expect to see significant improvements in school performance in the relevant areas well within the next 12 months.

MODERATE confidence means that the evaluation team believes that the current school leadership will quickly begin to act on the recommendations in the report but will need

additional support to implement them in full. The team would expect to see noticeable improvements in school performance in the relevant areas within the next 12 months. The team recommends that the school receives support to develop and implement its plan for improvement.

LOW confidence means that the evaluation team believes that the current school leadership does not have the capacity to act on the recommendations in the report. Under the current leadership the team would not expect to see sufficient improvement in school performance within the next 12 months. The team recommends that the leadership of the school should be reviewed.

What happens next?

The school should prepare an action plan indicating how it will address the recommendations in the report.

ACCREDITATION

The evaluation team has recommended to the Ministry of Education that the school is accredited

The evaluation team has further recommended that the school is awarded distinction as its practice has been judged to be Highly Effective in leadership and at least three other Focus Areas.

How to contact us

If you wish to comment on any aspect of this report you should contact: Hasna Bufteam on HasnaM.Bufteam@moe.gov.ae

مديرة إدارة الاعتماد المدرسي
نوال خالد حسن

